



MSC Virtuosa arriving in Port of Southampton ahead of the first cruise. Credit: Andrew Sassoli Walker

Cruise Britain welcomes the restart of UK cruise

Cruise Britain is delighted to see the opening of domestic cruise alongside the resumption of domestic tourism and in line with Step 3 of the UK Government roadmap out of lockdown. This long-awaited restart is the culmination of extensive collaboration between cruise industry partners and stakeholders, Government, health authorities, the Maritime Coastguard Agency and ports during the last twelve months.

Some 12 cruise lines are currently scheduled to sail on domestic cruises carrying UK residents with the first departure today (20 May). The health and safety of passengers, crew and the communities they will visit is of the highest priority and, with the support of UK Government, operators have developed enhanced health protocols that go beyond any other travel sector operating today. Cruise lines are adopting a 'multi-layered' approach, with multiple measures in place. The industry-leading enhanced protocols include 100% testing prior to embarkation, health screening, social distancing, shore excursions and contingency procedures.

The return of cruise is a long-awaited lifeline to those working in the industry ranging from ports large and small, to the extensive supply chain that supports the safe and successful delivery of cruise operations.

James Stangroom, Chair, said "Cruise Britain and our members have worked tirelessly to support the safe resumption of cruise and have just been waiting for the time to be right. Finally, the time is right for England and we couldn't be more pleased to see ships begin to sail again. As the domestic season gets underway, we look forward to UK passengers also being able to travel to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the coming months. "

“Well over 20 Cruise Britain member ports are expecting calls and are supported by many service provider members. With a dozen cruise lines currently offering domestic cruises, there has never been a wider choice of options to explore the UK on a maritime staycation” Stangroom added.

In another welcome step, the Global Travel Taskforce has included the restart of international cruise alongside wider international travel and the industry is actively engaged in working towards this.